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ABSTRACT

This study ascertained the relationship between rankings of 47 supervising classroom teachers and their attitudes toward education. Independent rankings of supervisory effectiveness were obtained from 47 classroom teachers, 91 student teachers, and 12 university personnel. Each classroom teacher completed two standardized attitude toward education scales which yielded four scores. The results indicated that teachers with progressive and favorable attitudes toward education tended to be perceived by student teachers as somewhat less effective supervisors. These results are of critical import to persons concerned with effective student teacher-classroom teacher interaction in field-based preservice programs. (Author)

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RANKINGS OF SUPERVISING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RANKINGS OF SUPERVISING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

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This study was promoted by a concern over the potential pairing of student teachers and elementary classroom teachers exposing differential attitudes toward education. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between the effectiveness of the supervising classroom teacher and the attitudes of the classroom and student teachers.

Social psychology theory suggests that relationships are facilitated when persons are in agreement on the philosophical and psychological dimension in question. Classroom teachers are traditionally stereotyped as being more conservative than liberal. Student teachers are typically assumed to be moderate to liberal in their educational attitudes, but certainly more liberal than classroom teachers. If there is a discrepancy between the educational attitudes of these two groups of persons, is this disparity related to the student teacher's evaluation of the supervisory effectiveness of the classroom teacher?

Yee(1969) has reviewed research that lists the hypothesis that supervising teachers influence the attitudes and teaching performance of their student teachers. In general, the hypothesis was supported. The data analyzed by Yee indicated that most student teachers shift their attitudes toward those of

their supervising teachers.

McKeachie et. al. (1971) in a series of studies found disappointing results in the use of student ratings of teacher effectiveness. They ascertained moderate correlations between perceived teacher effectiveness and skill and knowledge scores of the teachers. However, they argued that cognitive measures were only part of complex set of variables. Attitudinal measures were also important in determining teacher effectiveness. Mann (1968) found that there were positive correlations between certain cognitive measures and certain attitudinal measures for women with respect to teacher effectiveness. This result didn't hold for males.

PROCEDURE

This study is an outgrowth of a field based pre-service teacher education effort, designed to promote parity, relevance, and integration of theory with practice. These teachers were involved in a year-long teacher education program designed to: (a) produce high quality teachers (from student teachers); (b) promote increased supervisory competence in the classroom teacher; (c) provide in depth clinical field opportunities for university personnel, and (d) increase the field relevance of methods instruction by integrating it with student teaching and charging implementation to a public school-university team.

This study was conducted in a small midwestern city in conjunction with the local school system and a large teacher

education institution. The sample for this study consisted of 91 elementary teachers, primarily female, 47 classroom teachers and 12 methods instructors.

The student teachers received methods instruction in the areas of math, social studies, language arts and science in the elementary schools concurrently with their year long student teaching experience. Teachers and university personnel both participated in methods instruction and supervisory activities.

In addition, the student teachers were rotated through at least two school buildings, three different grade levels and three different supervising teachers. Program observation/participation requirements resulted in brief student teacher involvement with 7 to 12 more supervising teachers. Each methods instructor had teaching and supervisory responsibilities in each of the three collaborating schools.
Beside working in the buildings, weekly seminars were scheduled for the classroom teachers for the purposes of developing increased expertise in student teacher supervision, additional classroom skills, and to interact and exchange ideas with other classroom teachers. Thus, by the end of the year, each participant was familiar with the instructional and supervisory styles of classroom teachers, and with the personalities and instructional skills of the student teachers.

After the completed year experience measures of educational attitude and supervising teacher effectiveness were obtained from the student teachers, classroom teachers (super-

vising teachers) and methods instructors. One attitude scale developed by Kerlinger and Kaya (1959) yielded attitude toward education scores on the dimensions of progressive, traditional and total scores. This instrument was reported to have high reliability and validity coefficients and appeared to be appropriate for this study. A second scale was concerned with attitude toward education as a vocation and yielded a single score; this scale reported high reliability and validity coefficients (Merwin & Di Vesta 1962).

The names of all classroom teachers were placed on a sheet of paper. This listing was given to each project participant along with the instructions to rank order the top five classroom teachers with respect to their supervisory effectiveness. All Responses were anonymous. The materials were collected and the sum of ranks for each classroom teacher based upon the responses of the student teachers, classroom teachers and methods instructors were computed. Teachers with the highest sum of ranks were thought to be the most effective supervisors of student teachers. Only a very few classroom teachers did not receive any ratings. Those teachers receiving few or no votes were thought to be weaker supervisors in the project.

To summarize, each classroom teacher had seven scores: 1) progressive attitude; 2) traditional attitude; 3) total attitude toward education; 4) education as a vocation; 5) sum of classroom teacher rankings; 6) sum of student teacher rankings; 7) sum of methods instructor rankings. Each student

teacher had a score on the four attitude measures.

RESULTS

The seven scores for the classroom teacher were submitted to a rank order correlation procedure. This procedure resulted in a 7x7 correlation matrix (See table 1). Considering the crudeness of the ranking scale there was high agreement among the three groups ranking the classroom teachers supervisory effectiveness (r_{ct-st}=.77, r_{ct-mi}=.72, r_{st-mi}=.74). Each group appeared to be able to consistently identify what they perceived as the strong and weak supervisors. There was also high agreement among the four attitude measures except for the slight negative correlation between the total and traditional attitude scores; all other correlations ranged between .49 and .82.

TABLE 1

Rank Order Correlation Matrix Based on Classroom Teachers Scores

	Traditional	Total	Vocational	Student Ranking	Teacher Ranking	Instructor Ranking
Progressive	*.60	*.67	*.82	*-.26	-.14	.15
Traditional		-.17	*.61	*-.27	*-.42	-.16
Total			*.49	-.12	.18	* .31
Vocational				*-.34	*-.26	-.009
Student					* .77	* .72
Teacher						* .74

* sinigicantly greater than or less than zero with P .05
N:47

The most interesting results occured when the correlations among the attitude and supervisory effectiveness scores were consistently negative. Nine of the twelve correlations were negative and five of the nine were significantly less than zero with P<.05. The correlations among the attitude measures based upon the responses of the student teachers are found in Table 2.

Table 2

Rank Order Correlation Matrix Based on Student Teacher Responses

	Traditional	Total	Vocational
Progressive	-.16	* .65	-.04
Traditional		*-.84	.19
Total			.17

* significantly greater than or less than zero with P<.05, N=91

Responses from the students indicate the respective positive and negative relationship between total score and the progressive and traditional scores. The vocational score did not show any significant relationship with the other attitude scores for this group of subjects.

A one way analysis of variance was applied to each of the four attitude scores comparing the student teacher and classroom teacher responses (see table 3). A statistically significant difference was found between the two groups on the progresseive, traditional and total attitude toward education scales (P<.01).

The student teachers responded significantly more positively than the classroom teachers on the progressive and total attitude scales while the classroom teachers responded significantly

Table 3

Comparison of Student Teacher and Classroom Teacher Responses on Attitude Measures Via Analysis of Variance

Progressive Attitude

	MS	df	F
Between	512.11	1	*13.18
Within	38.83	134	

$\bar{X}_{st}$=58.83 $\bar{X}_{ct}$=54.71

Traditional Attitude

	MS	df	F
Between	2191.94	1	*28.83
Within	76.03	134	

$\bar{X}_{st}$=36.89 $\bar{X}_{ct}$=45.42

Total Attitude Score

	MS	df	F
Between	4215.82	1	*36.75
Within	114.32	133	

$\bar{X}_{st}$=44.95 $\bar{X}_{ct}$=33.02

Education as a Vocation

	MS	df	F
Between	74.38	1	1.42
Within	52.26	134	

$\bar{X}_{st}$=50.45 $\bar{X}_{ct}$=52.02

* F.99 (1, 125) = 6.84

Each raw score variable was linearly transformed to eliminate negative scores

more positively than the student teachers on the traditional attitude scale. These results support considerable conjecture and belief in the areas of teacher education.

DISCUSSION

Why would student teachers tend to perceive classroom teachers with ~~most~~ highly traditional or highly progressive attitudes toward education as ~~not~~ the ~~more~~ less effective supervisors of student teachers? This question is especially perplexing when these student teachers express so many progressive feelings about pupils and teacher behavior on personal data forms completed prior to reporting to the school classrooms. Repeatedly, they make such statements as: (a) I will never use repressive or inconsiderate disciplinary tactics, (b) I want to be a guider of learning -- a coordinator of learning experiences and not an expositor of information, (c) the most important thing in teaching is to provide individualized attention and instruction for every child, (d) multi-cultural awareness, processes of inquiry, and self-concept formation are critical classroom concerns. These are progressive educational views not always exposed by the experienced teachers to whom the student teachers report. Yet, the student teachers eventually come to rate as very effective supervisors, teachers who do not highly support these progressive views. Teachers exposing highly traditional attitudes are also rated as the less effective supervisors.

Several explanations can be examined. Prior research has indicated that student teachers do model after their supervising teacher and tend to reflect the beliefs and behaviors of that supervisor. However, in this program, the student teacher is deliberately assigned to three supervising teachers of differing educational philosophies and education approaches and observes others. The modeling syndrome can not be glibly used as a reason for the relationship. It would seem that there would be an equal chance for the student to model after the progressive or traditional teacher. In the final analysis the student teacher ends up being most impressed with the teacher who is not extremely progressive or traditional in her attitude but rather is at some point between the two extreme points on the continuum.

The typical student teacher is highly idealistic and anxious to make great inroads and modifications in the American educational system. This philosophy causes the student teacher to reject the attitudes, philosophies and methods of the highly traditional teacher. At the same time the inexperienced student teacher is seeking change and looks to the progressive teacher for assistance. The student teacher is suddenly confronted with philosophies and methods which she has never implemented and it may be that the student teacher just does not have the experience, the knowledge, the organized lesson plans, ideas for diversified classroom learning activities, and the disciplinary skills needed to implement the idealist and "guidance-oriented"

concept of classroom teaching. Early attempts to practice the concept often result in classroom confusion, disciplinary problems, and depressed classroom achievement. Such results are not unexpected when beginning teachers attempt to change quickly the traditional classroom atmospheres in which they are placed so often. Anxious and uncomfortable, the student teacher then turns to the supervising teacher for help. It is at this point that the well-organized, conservative supervising teacher can demonstrate long-practiced pupil control and institutional techniques that keep the teacher in the center of the learning process and restore the student teacher's faith in her leadership ability. The student teacher remembers this help was forthcoming, observes that it works, reflects over the fact that the new means are for a different educational end, and modifies her behavior to assume a middle of the road position. Thus it is the middle of the road teacher, the one who can accommodate progressive educational ideas and balance these with traditional educational ideas who is seen as the most effective supervising teacher.

There is a basic assumption which transcends the above discussion. Namely that the teacher's espoused attitudes accurately reflect their behavioral manifestations. From personal observation, this was generally warranted on the part of the classroom teachers. However, the expressed attitudes of the student teachers were more progressive than their accompanying behaviors.

Thus while the student teacher retains some of her idealism, (high progressive attitude scores) she is unable to accommodate the progressive teacher's positions. However, there was a confounding factor. A few of the progressive teachers in the study are not only non-traditional but un-organized and unstructured. These teachers may oppose planning of lessons, assessment of pupil achievement, establishment of rules, etc. They operate under a philosophy of "it will all work itself out". Imposing structure through planning, evaluation, or data-based feedback in antithetical to their idea of a progressive, democratic classroom. Student teachers are thus expected to let their professional growth "work itself out". But the student teacher in university courses has been exhorted to be more analytical about teaching behaviors and learning results. Hence they do not perceive the laissez-faire, progressive, and permissive supervising teacher as an effective supervisor. Supervisory effectiveness is related to utilitariam assistance and feedback received and little was received.

The relationships indicated in this study might well be different in a setting where a higher percentage of teachers not only are progressive relative to educational attitudes but have thoughtfully constructed the plans, schedules, role definitions and goals needed to implement their ideas. There may be a tendency for many teachers to believe progressive teaching requires less time, less work, and less evaluation. Our observation is that it requires more work -- and a logical structure.

Universities rarely prepare the progressive thinking teecher to translate progressive thought into 6 to 8 hours of daily work. The traditional teacher on the other hand is more comfortable with sturcture and teacher defined clarity and translates her beliefs into observable classroom activities and rules. The latter teacher has recipies, materials, and standards to pass on to the student teacher. More comfortable with structure, and more successful with a charted approach, the student teacher does not like being unable to make change but welcomes the recipies and defines them as effective supervision. This accomodation on the part of the student teacher probably results in the retaining of relatively progressive educational attitudes but behaviors that reflect a compromise between the two extremes.

In summary, the following things were ascertained:

1. The reported student teacher attitudes toward education are more progressive than the classroom teacher attitudes.
2. The reported classroom teacher attitudes toward education are more traditional than the student teacher attitudes.
3. There is high agreement among the student teacher, classroom teacher and methods instructor groups with respect to identifying the effective (and ineffective) supervising teachers.
4. There was no difference between the reported attitudes of classroom teachers and student teachers with respect to education as a vocation.

5. Classroom teachers espousing highly traditional or highly progressive attitudes were seen as the less effective supervising teachers as witnessed by the consistent negative correlations among the sets of attitudes and supervisory measures.

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